

CLAIMS

What is Claimed Is:

1. A method for determining an inbound traffic intensity factor representative of a number of meaningful visits to a visitable site in a given time period, the method comprising the steps of:
 - obtaining visitor information including the number of visits to a visitable site during the given time period and the duration of each said visit; and
 - calculating an inbound traffic intensity factor for the visitable site for the given time period in accordance with the formula:

$$ITIF = \sum_{i=1}^n t_i^x$$

wherein ITIF is the inbound traffic intensity factor of the visitable site during the given time period k; i is a visit; n represents a number of visits to the visitable site; t_i is a number of incremental units of time associated with each visit i, and x is a power factor having a value between zero and one.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein n is the total number of visits to the visitable site during the given time period k.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of obtaining visitor information includes the step of determining a number of new visitors and a number of repeat visitors and wherein n represents the number of new visitors plus the number of repeat visitors.

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4. The method of claim 1, wherein the time period k is a predefined continuous period of time.

10 5. The method of claim 1, further including the step of reporting the inbound traffic intensity factor using one of scientific notation or a log scale.

15 6. The method of claim 1, wherein n is a size of a sample drawn from a total relevant population (N) within the time period k and wherein the step of calculating includes the step of determining an absolute inbound traffic intensity factor as N/n times ITIF.

20 7. The method of claim 1, wherein n is a size of a sample drawn from a total relevant population within the time period k and wherein the step of calculating includes the step of determining a relative inbound traffic intensity factor as 1/n times ITIF.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the given time period k is one month.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the duration of each visit t_i is in minutes.
10. The method of claim 1, wherein the visitable site is selected from the group consisting of an internet web site, an intranet web site, a television broadcast, a radio broadcast, a periodical publication, an advertisement in print, radio, television or internet medium, a public exhibition, a tradeshow, a professional meeting, a convention, a museum, an art gallery, and a retail establishment.
- 10 11. A method for determining trends in inbound traffic intensity of a visitable site over a plurality of time units comprising the steps of:
- (a) determining an inbound traffic intensity factor for the visitable site for a first one of the time units in said plurality of time units by;
- 15 (i) obtaining visitor information including the number of visits to a visitable site during the given time unit and the duration of each said visit; and
- (ii) calculating an inbound traffic intensity factor for the visitable site for the given time period in accordance with the formula:
- $$ITIF = \sum_{i=1}^n t_i^x$$
- 20 wherein ITIF is the inbound traffic intensity factor of the visitable site during the given time period k; i is a visit; n represents a number of

visits to the visitable site; t_i is a number of incremental units of time associated with each visit i , and x is a power factor having a value between zero and one;

- (b) determining the inbound traffic intensity factor for the visitable site for
5 at least one next consecutive time unit in said plurality of time units using steps (i)
and (ii); and
10 (c) comparing the inbound traffic intensity factors from the first time unit
and the one next consecutive time unit to determine whether the intensity of inbound
traffic to the visitable site is increasing, decreasing or remaining the same from one
time unit to the next.

12. The method of claim 11, further including the step of normalizing the
inbound traffic intensity factors obtained in steps (a) and (b) to define a normalized
inbound traffic intensity factor for the first one of the time units and the next one of
15 the time units.

13. The method of claim 11, wherein each of the time units is a month.

14. A method for ranking visitable sites according to their respective relative inbound traffic intensity factors, comprising the steps of:

collecting data on the number of visits and the duration of each visit to a plurality of visitable sites for a selected period of time;

5 calculating an inbound intensity factor for each visitable site for the selected time period according to

$$ITIF = \sum_{i=1}^n t_i^x$$

wherein ITIF is the inbound traffic intensity factor of the visitable site during the given time period k; i is a visit; n represents a number of visits to the visitable site; t_i 10 is a number of incremental units of time associated with each visit i, and x is a power factor having a value between zero and one; and thereafter,

comparing and ranking the visitable sites according to the values of their respective calculated inbound traffic intensity factors.

15. The method of claim 14, further including the step determining if the inbound traffic intensity factor for a site is increasing, decreasing or remaining the same.

16. The method of claim 14, wherein the step of collecting data includes 20 the step of determining a number of new visitors and a number of repeat visitors and wherein n represents the number of new visitors plus the number of repeat visitors.

17. The method of claim 14, wherein the time period k is a continuous period of time.

18. The method of claim 14, wherein the step of comparing and ranking 5 includes the step of displaying the inbound traffic intensity factors using one of scientific notation or a log scale.

19. A method of determining an inbound traffic intensity factor representative of a measure of meaningful visits to a visitable site in a given time 10 period, the method comprising the steps of:

obtaining visitor information including the number of visits to a visitable site during the given time period and the duration of each said visit;

calculating an inbound traffic intensity factor for the visitable site for the given time period using both the number of visits and the length of each of said visits; 15 and

displaying the inbound traffic intensity factor.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein the step of calculating an inbound traffic intensity factor includes the step of computing the time for each particular visit raised to a preset power. 20

21. The method of claim 20, wherein the step of calculating includes the step of using a preset power having a value between zero and one.

22. The method of claim 20, wherein the step of calculating the inbound traffic intensity factor includes the step of summing the computed times for each particular visit raised to the preset power together.

5 23. The method of claim 19, wherein the step of calculating the inbound traffic intensity factor includes the step of using the formula:

$$ITIF = \sum_{i=1}^n t_i^x$$

wherein ITIF is the inbound traffic intensity factor of the visitable site during the given time period k; i is a visit; n represents a number of visits to the visitable site; t_i is a number of incremental units of time associated with each visit i, and x is a power factor having a value between zero and one.

10 24. The method of claim 23, wherein n is the total number of visits to the visitable site during the given time period k.

15 25. The method of claim 23, wherein n is a size of sample drawn from a total relevant population (N) within the time period k and wherein the step of calculating includes the step of determining an absolute inbound traffic intensity factor as N/n times ITIF.

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26. The method of claim 23, wherein n is a size of a sample drawn from a total relevant population within the time period k and wherein the step of calculating includes the step of determining a relative inbound traffic intensity factor as $1/n$ times ITIF.

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27. The method of claim 19, wherein the step of obtaining visitor information includes the step of determining a number of new visitors and a number of repeat visitors.

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28. The method of claim 19, wherein the step of obtaining visitor information includes the step of obtaining the visitor information within a single continuous period of time.

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29. The method of claim 19, wherein the step of displaying includes the step of reporting the inbound traffic intensity factor using one of scientific notation or a log scale.

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30. A system for determining an inbound traffic intensity factor representative of a measure of meaningful visits to a visitable site in a given time period to be used with a computer system including a processor, the system comprising:

- 5 a computer-readable memory adapted to be coupled to the processor;
- a first routine stored on the memory and adapted to be executed on the processor to obtain visitor information including the number of visits to a visitable site during the given time period and the duration of each said visit; and
- a second routine stored on the memory and adapted to be executed on the
- 10 processor to calculate an inbound traffic intensity factor for the visitable site for the given time period using both the number of visits and the length of each of said visits.

31. The system of claim 30, further including a display routine that displays the inbound traffic intensity factor to a user.

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32. The system of claim 30, wherein the second routine further calculates the inbound traffic intensity factor by computing the time for each particular visit raised to a preset power.

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33. The system of claim 32, wherein the preset power is a value between zero and one.

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34. The system of claim 33, wherein the second routine further sums the computed times for each particular visit raised to the preset power together.

35. The system of claim 30, wherein the visitable site is a web site.

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36. The system of claim 30, wherein the visitable site is a non-web site.

37. The system of claim 30, wherein the second routine calculates the inbound traffic intensity factor according to the formula:

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$$ITIF = \sum_{i=1}^n t_i^x$$

wherein ITIF is the inbound traffic intensity factor of the visitable site during the given time period k; i is a visit; n represents a number of visits to the visitable site; t_i is a number of incremental units of time associated with each visit i, and x is a power factor having a value between zero and one.

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38. The system of claim 37, wherein n is the total number of visits to the visitable site during the given time period k.

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39. The system of claim 37, wherein n is a size of a sample drawn from a total relevant population (N) within the time period k and wherein the second routine further determines an absolute inbound traffic intensity factor as N/n times ITIF.

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40. The system of claim 37, wherein n is a size of a sample drawn from a total relevant population within the time period k and wherein the step of calculating includes the step of determining a relative inbound traffic intensity factor as $1/n$ times ITIF.